

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 6-8, and 11-12 are pending in the present application, Claims 1, 4, 7, 11, and 12 having been amended, and Claims 5, 9, and 10 having been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Support for the amendments to Claims 1, 4, 7, 11, and 12 is found, for example, in Figs. 5A and 5B of the present application. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 2, and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Chapelon et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,071,238, hereinafter Chapelon); Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Chapelon in view of Vaezy et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,716,184, hereinafter Vaezy); and Claims 3-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Capelon in view of Kubota et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,255,669, hereinafter Kubota).

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy of an interview extended to Applicants' representatives on April 8, 2009. During the interview, differences between the present invention and the applied art, and the rejections noted in the outstanding Office Action were discussed. The Examiners indicated that the amended claim discussed during the interview may distinguish over the art of record. However, no agreement as to allowability was reached as the amended form of the claims required further searching. Arguments presented during the interview are reiterated below and the claim amendment discussed during the interview is submitted for formal consideration.

With respect to the rejection of Claim 1 as anticipated by Chapelon, Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment to Claim 1 overcomes this ground of rejection. Amended Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*,

wherein said insertion member includes a plurality of projections extending along an outer surface of the insertion member and in the longitudinal direction, said holding portion including a clasp configured to engage and disengage with said plurality of projections, and an area of said holding portion including the clasp also including a first thread profile; [and]

a fixer configured to move along said holding portion in the longitudinal direction so as to surround the clasp and the plurality of projections, the fixer including a second thread profile, and the fixer being further configured to engage with the area of said holding portion including the first thread profile by coupling the second thread profile with the first thread profile.

Chapelon does not disclose or suggest at least these elements of amended Claim 1.

Chapelon describes an ultrasound therapy probe. As shown by arrow 5 in Figs. 1 and 2 of Chapelon, the transducer 3 moves between a retracted position and an imaging position. However, Chapelon does not disclose or suggest the above-noted elements of amended Claim 1. The projections, thread profiles, and fixer of Claim 1 are not disclosed or suggested by Chapelon.

Moreover, Chapelon does not appear to suggest that the probe has multiple imaging positions. On the contrary, Figs. 2 and 4 of Chapelon suggest that the probe is either fully retracted or fully extended. There is no suggestion that the probe is locked into an intermediate position.

Furthermore, Kubota does not cure the above-noted deficiencies in Chapelon. Fig. 17 of Kubota shows an ultrasonic treatment apparatus that includes projections 114, screw-in type coupling portion 100, and O-rings 108. However, these features of Kubota do not equate to the above-noted structure of amended Claim 1.

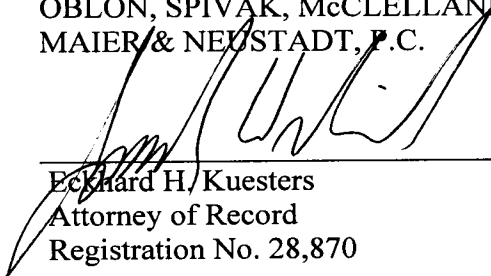
Furthermore, Vaezy does not cure the above-noted deficiencies in Chapelon. Vaezy describes an ultrasound therapy head. However, the devices shown in Figs. 9A-21 of Vaezy do not have the structure of amended Claim 1.

In view of the above-noted distinctions, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 (and Claims 2-10 dependent thereon) patentably distinguish over Chapelon, Kubota, and Vaezy, taken alone or in proper combination. Claims 11 and 12 recite elements analogous to those of Claim 1. Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 11 and 12 patentably distinguish over Chapelon, Kubota, and Vaezy, taken alone or in proper combination, for at least the reasons stated for Claim 1.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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